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United Nations Disarmament Information Programme

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme carried out by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in the priority areas of: (a) weapons of mass destruction and (b) conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons. The report also records the activities carried out by the Department of Public Information on disarmament issues

The Programme will continue to publish *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, with the addition of an archival version in CD/ROM. The web site, disarmament.un.org, has seen a dramatic increase in the number of visitors over the last two years, and the Programme will expand and improve its content and form. The Department will continue to facilitate participation of civil society organizations in disarmament-related meetings and conferences and to cooperate with non-governmental organizations, especially coalitions that spearhead the participation of a large number of such organizations in the field of disarmament.

* A/59/150.

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I. Introduction

1. By resolution 57/90 of 22 November 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report covering both the implementation of the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme by the United Nations system during the previous two years and the activities of the Programme contemplated for the following two years. The Information Programme is administered by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in close collaboration with the Department for Public Information, in particular on information campaigns focused on major disarmament-related events and conferences.

2. The objectives of the Disarmament Information Programme reflect the overall orientation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, guided by the priorities of Member States as enunciated in the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly.

3. Weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, especially nuclear weapons, continued to be of primary concern to the international community. Recent developments have heightened interest in the issue of weapons of mass destruction and their possible terrorist use. The second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2003 and 2004, increased demand for information not only from the Department's prime target audience, the diplomatic community, but also from international organizations and civil society organizations, as well as the press and the public.

4. Another priority area is conventional weapons, in particular: the transparency mechanism of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; the humanitarian and development impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; and challenges and achievements of the process to regulate and eradicate anti-personnel landmines. The rise in global military expenditures over recent years has raised concerns, especially among the public. The issue of the relationship between disarmament and development has also attracted more attention, and in that regard the recommendations contained in the report prepared by a group of governmental experts in 2004 reappraising the issue in the current international context will be a focus of the Programme in the coming years.

5. With the growth in the importance of the Internet as a tool for mass communications, the Programme needed to devote more time and energy to the production of a web site to serve global client needs. The volume of visitors to the web site, a visitor is counted as one person regardless of the number of web pages viewed or the number of times logged in for a day, has risen exponentially over the last two years. The Programme will continue to strive to make the site more attractive, friendly and dynamic, as well as easier to access by a wide spectrum of users.

6. In accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 57/60 of 22 November 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124) and to submit it to the

Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. A separate report has been issued on this item (A/59/178). The 34 recommendations of the study provide a practical guide to the work of the Programme in the educational sector, which will steer its course over the next biennium.

7. In a series of resolutions adopted at its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly reaffirmed the usefulness of the Department's three regional centres, in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, in carrying out dissemination and educational programmes. The Department has worked through its regional centres by promoting dialogue, encouraging the adoption of confidence-building measures, training on small arms issues and the promotion of information components of events in their respective regions. The separate reports to the General Assembly on the three regional centres provide further confirmation on their activities.

8. The United Nations disarmament fellowship training and advisory services is the Department's largest annual training programme. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 57/93 of 22 November 2002, a separate report on its activities has been submitted to the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly (A/59/177).

9. In line with the standing request of the General Assembly in 1984, asking the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to report to the Assembly on the activities of the Institute on a yearly basis, an account of the information and education activities of the Institute for the last two years are contained in separate reports transmitted by the Secretary-General for consideration by the Assembly (A/58/259 and A/59/168).

10. Funding for the Disarmament Information Programme is derived from the regular budget and from extrabudgetary resources, in particular from the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Programme. The status as at 31 December 2003 is contained in annex I to the present report. The Trust Fund continued to benefit from the generosity of Member States and private donors. The Department for Disarmament Affairs is grateful for the donations and support it has received. It wishes to extend particular appreciation to the following States that contributed to the Programme during the reporting period: China, the Czech Republic, Greece, Germany, Mexico, Panama, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

II. Information resources

A. Publication programme

11. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* is the Department's flagship publication. The publication of the language versions of *The Disarmament Yearbook* has suffered delays over the years. The last version of the publication issued in all official languages of the United Nations was the 1999 edition, Volume 25. The 2000 edition, Volume 26, was issued in 2001 in all official languages except Arabic. Volume 27 was issued in English only in 2002. The 2003 English edition, Volume 28, will appear in August 2004.

12. The English version of the yearbook is issued in a print-run of 2,950 copies and distributed worldwide to United Nations libraries, as well as to its depositary

library system, United Nations information centres, in multiple copies to all permanent missions in New York and Geneva, to the offices of the regional commissions and to parliamentary libraries. It is sold in United Nations bookshops to subscribers and non-subscribers, with approximately 500 copies of each edition being sold. An additional copy is distributed to all delegations participating in the work of the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. In addition, it is distributed to approximately 600 research institutes, organizations and individuals, mainly in the developing world.

13. By paragraph 5 (a) of resolution 57/90, the General Assembly requested the Programme to report on the results of the survey of users of *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* conducted by the Department of Public Information among subscribers and by the Department for Disarmament Affairs among delegations.

14. From 22 August to 30 November 2002, the Department of Public Information conducted a survey to assist the Department for Disarmament Affairs in determining if there was sufficient customer interest in purchasing *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* on CD-ROM in both the latest and archival editions. Around 30 replies were received from academics, businesses, governments, libraries and students, from North America (65 per cent), Europe (19 per cent), Latin America (8 per cent), Africa (4 per cent) and the Middle East (4 per cent).

15. The results demonstrated general support for the current content and format of *The United Nations Yearbook* and for its continued issuance. While respondents wanted to continue to receive the print version, strong interest was expressed in archive copies of the current and previous editions of the *Yearbook* in a CD-ROM format, updated yearly. Interest was also expressed in putting the publication on the Internet. Equal importance was given to such features as full-text search, index search, navigation mechanisms and downloadable tables. The Department of Public Information suggested that the Department for Disarmament Affairs continue the print version, but consider having both CD-ROM and Internet versions, as well.

16. In 2002, the Department for Disarmament Affairs conducted its own survey among the permanent missions of the United Nations (a copy of which is contained in annex II to the present report) for any delegations that still wished to complete it.

17. As of 20 November 2003, the Department for Disarmament Affairs had received responses from 15 Member States (approximately 8 per cent of Member States), which extolled the usefulness of the publication. Satisfaction was expressed about the quality of the information contained as well as its technical presentation. The majority of respondents expressed interest in having the *Yearbook* also available online, on CD-ROM or both.

18. Though the replies to both surveys were not numerous, the Department had carried out surveys in the past in which only one or two replies had been received, and thus the quantity received this time was more indicative. As a direct result, the Department for Disarmament Affairs will be issuing a CD-ROM containing at least the three latest editions of *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, which will be made available to delegations free of charge, and will be exploring the feasibility of online publication.

19. The Programme published two issues of its dark-blue covered study series, in all six languages. The series, a non-sales publication, produced in small quantities in a serial format, serves to highlight General Assembly studies undertaken by groups

of governmental experts by packaging them in an attractive form for wider dissemination and future use. Plans have been made to publish the following three studies:

- No. 29, April 2003, The issue of missiles in all its aspects (A/57/229);
- No. 30, April 2003, United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124);
- Forthcoming: the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context, first quarter of 2005;
- Forthcoming: the issue of missiles in all its aspects, second report, first quarter of 2005;
- Forthcoming: developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, first quarter of 2006.

20. The Occasional Papers series was developed to give wider dissemination to the expert inputs from panels and seminars sponsored by the Department at Headquarters. The publication is produced in English only, free of charge and posted on the Department's web site. The following three have been or will soon be issued:

- Occasional Paper No. 6, October 2002, "A Disarmament Agenda for the Twenty-first Century, United Nations-China Conference", Beijing, 2-4 April 2002;
- Occasional Paper No. 7, May 2003, "Disarmament in Conflict Prevention", a panel discussion organized by the Department in October 2002 to explore the concept of disarmament as an integral tool to support conflict prevention strategies;
- Occasional Paper No. 8 (forthcoming), September 2004, "The Relationship between disarmament and development", based on the presentations made at a panel discussion organized by the Department in March 2004 to assist the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts preparing a study on the issue.

21. The Programme also issues a quarterly short newsletter, the *Department for Disarmament Affairs Update*, aimed at the general public and available online, focusing on the topical issues with which the Department is engaged. During the reporting period, five issues were published: June/July 2002; September/October 2002; January/February 2003; September 2003; and December 2003.

22. Work continued on the audio-documentary, "Nobel Voices for Disarmament", a two-compact disk package containing interviews with living Nobel laureates who were awarded the Nobel Peace prize for their work in the field of disarmament and with individuals associated with laureates and the organizations they worked for. The CD set will be published in 2005, in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and of the founding of the United Nations.

23. The following ad hoc publications were or will be issued during the period covered by this report:

- Brochure entitled, *2003 Report of Governmental Experts: Important Highlights*, produced by the Department with the assistance of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, available on the Department's web site under the heading "United Nations Register of Conventional Arms", see publications;
- "Small Arms and Light Weapons, Selected United Nations Documents" (DPI/2353), June 2004, published by the Department and the Department of Public Information, under the aegis of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, to facilitate ongoing work on the issue;
- Publication in cooperation with the NGO Committee on Disarmament, New York, containing the proceedings of a series of panel discussions held on the issue of biological weapons (forthcoming).

B. Disarmament.un.org

24. Pursuant to the recommendation made by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/90, the Department devoted more human resources to maintaining and improving both substantive content and technical delivery of its web site.

25. The overall design of the web site remains oriented to issues and not to institutional structures. The priorities of the Department determine its core content. Its front page provides up-to-date material on disarmament-related press releases, statements of the Secretary-General and other senior United Nations officials, information on current and upcoming events in the field of disarmament and relevant background documentation. Its substantive pages disseminate information and documentation of major disarmament-related conferences. Documentation relating to these conferences was posted in all official United Nations languages.

26. In particular, the site was an important tool for collating and circulating data and information provided by States, regional and non-governmental organizations, such as national legislation, national focal points and national reports, as agreed in the Programme of Action and requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 56/24 V of 24 December 2001, 57/72 of 22 November 2002 and 58/241 of 23 December 2003.

27. There were three innovations made to the Department's web site during the period under review:

(a) With a view to easing the search for the documentation of multilateral disarmament conferences and other meetings, including the Conference on Disarmament, review conferences and expert groups, an online, continuously updated disarmament reference library was added, containing a collection of such documentation in full text format;

(b) As recommended by the 2002 United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, an online resource on disarmament and non-proliferation education is under construction;

(c) A printer-friendly feature was added to the disarmament-related General Assembly resolutions and decisions database.

28. In relation to technical delivery, the Department for Disarmament Affairs installed a back-up web server to offer uninterrupted service to the site. The site can now handle a larger volume of visitor traffic and provide more efficient responses to web service requests.

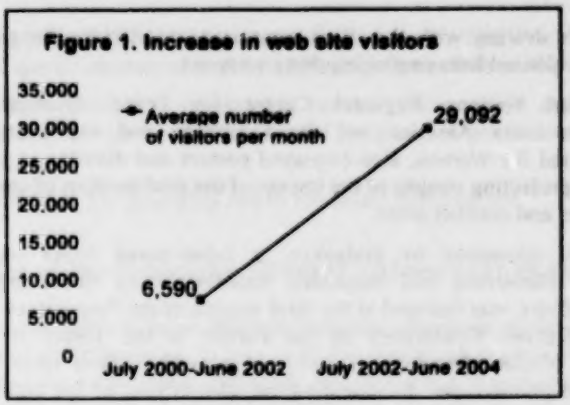
29. As foreseen in the previous report, the Department also installed a mechanism to assist it in monitoring the site. Statistics on the number of hits and visitors, favourite pages and peak hours, days or weeks are kept monthly. The most visited features are the status of multilateral disarmament-related treaties and agreements, disarmament-related General Assembly resolutions and decisions, the reporting mechanisms of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and article 7 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Mine Ban Convention) and pages related to weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

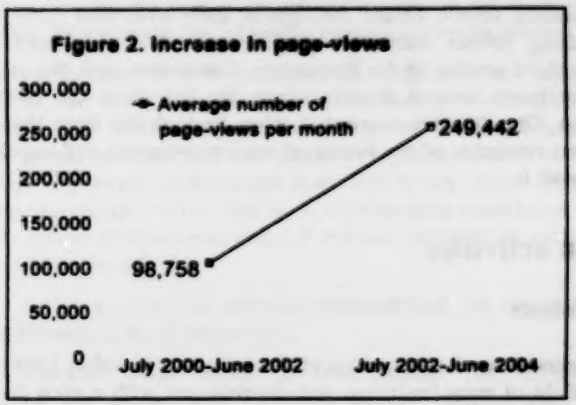
30. The statistics show that the number of visitors has increased to more than 1,000 per day, 15 per cent more than before the new server was installed. They also indicate that users hail from more than 170 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America and Oceania. On average, there are approximately 29,092 visitors per month to the site (more than a four-fold increase from the last period) and a total of 249,442 pages were viewed (almost three times more than that of last period). Figure 1 and figure 2 show the increase of visitors and page-views in the reporting period. The number of visitors usually increases 15 to 20 per cent during preparations for and during the session of the General Assembly. The Department's web e-mail box received hundreds of inquiries from around the world.

31. Regular monitoring will improve the Department's understanding of the kind of information that is being sought and on the best ways to deliver it.

32. Looking ahead, the Department plans to provide full-text Internet search capability on the web site. This service will include basic and advanced search services with the spell-check function. With this feature, all the contents of web-based pages and text-based PDF files will be search-enabled.

33. In cooperation with the Department of Public Information and the Publications Board working group on Internet matters, the Department is examining ways to expand the multilingual version of its web site.





C. Exhibits

34. In the light of rising military expenditures, the Department is collaborating with the Department of Public Information to update parts of the disarmament exhibit on the public guided tour. In particular, the figures contained in the inverted cone graphically demonstrating the unequal global spending on the military as compared to economic and social causes need to be made current.

35. In conjunction with the United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Plan of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, organized and displayed exhibits at United Nations Headquarters: the International Action Network on Small Arms, and Safer Africa.

36. The International Action Network on Small Arms, an umbrella organization for NGOs dealing with the issue of small arms and light weapons, included in their display an eclectic array of posters and video projections that aimed to reflect the diversity of their membership. The Safer Africa exhibit contained posters and

related materials dealing with the illicit arms trade in Africa, along with large photographs of child soldiers employing these weapons.

37. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, also displayed posters and distributed publications at large booths, projecting images of the impact of the proliferation of small arms on affected societies and conflict areas.

38. An exhibit sponsored by Hidankyo, a Japan-based NGO composed of survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, coordinated by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, was featured at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Hidankyo displayed artifacts from 1945 along with posters and photographs documenting the after-effects of the bombing of the two cities. Video projections also highlighted the stories of the survivors, many of whom have endured severe illness throughout their lives and have found their numbers dwindling further with each passing year. Many delegates and other attendees at the third session of the Preparatory Committee took the opportunity to visit the display booth located directly across the hall from the entrance to the conference room. One delegate mentioned when he took the floor that the exhibit was an important reminder of the horror of nuclear weapons and urged his fellow participants to visit it.

III. Information activities

A. Panel discussions

39. The Department continued a series of discussions initiated in 1998 on topics of interest in the field of arms limitation and disarmament with a view to broadening understanding and facilitating a meaningful discussion of the issues among Member States, academics, civil society, United Nations officials and the press. In most instances, in order to extend their outreach, the practice was continued of posting the presentations made at the symposiums on the Department's web site. The following events took place:

- 1 October 2002, Disarmament and conflict prevention
- 3 October 2002, Disarmament issues for the twenty-first century and the impact of September 11th
- 9 October 2002, Launch of the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (in cooperation with the Hague appeal for peace, global campaign for peace education)
- 14 October 2002, Status of the Outer Space Treaty 35 years after its entry into force (in cooperation with the Kurtz Institute for Peacemaking)
- 15 October 2002, Tenth anniversary of the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms (in cooperation with the Governments of Canada, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands)

- 20 May 2003, Multilateral disarmament after the Iraq War, 25 years since the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament
- 9 March 2004, The relationship between disarmament and development, in conjunction with the third session of the group of governmental experts on the issue.

40. The themes for upcoming events are under development.

B. Activities of the Secretary-General's Messenger of Peace

41. Over the last two years, Michael Douglas, appointed by the Secretary-General as a Messenger of Peace on 30 July 1998, has continued to use his celebrity status to attract attention to the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the impact of illicit small arms proliferation, in particular to support the rule of international law and the role of the United Nations in the field. During the period under review, he has made the following important contributions:

(a) Participated in a documentary on child soldiers, filmed on location in Sierra Leone, for the Department of Public Information's *UN Works* campaign, produced by RCN Showtime, one in a series of 10 family-targeted films being nationally broadcast to inform and educate the United States population about the transcendent importance of the issues dealt with by the United Nations (April 2003). Describing the making of the film as a life-changing experience, Mr. Douglas has frequently spoken in interviews about it and has appeared on national talk shows to highlight the documentary;

(b) Acted in a public service announcement on the costs of armaments during the filming of the documentary;

(c) Narrated "Nobel Voices for Disarmament" (CD, forthcoming in 2005), organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs with the Smithsonian Institution;

(d) Together with Jane Goodall, addressed the United States House of Representatives bipartisan task force on non-proliferation on the subject of the limits of unilateralism (Washington, D.C. October 2003);

(e) Addressed the United States Institute for Peace on the subject of child soldiers and screened the documentary filmed in Sierra Leone (Washington, D.C., October 2003);

(f) Filmed a world chronicle television segment for the Department of Public Information on the subject of nuclear non-proliferation and small arms, in addition to fulfilling his role as Messenger of Peace (May 2004).

C. Briefings

42. At the request of the Public Inquiries Unit of the Department of Public Information, staff members of the Department undertook approximately 34 briefing engagements per year for the benefit of: (a) student visitors in the framework of university programmes dealing with the United Nations; (b) United Nations Association members from various countries; (c) Foreign Ministry trainees;

(d) students preparing for the model United Nations exercises; (e) visiting members of NGOs.

IV. Cooperation with civil society, especially non-governmental organizations

43. The Department carried out numerous activities that are described below. In addition, it maintained close contact on an ongoing basis with a number of major NGO coalitions, among them Reaching Critical Will, the International Action Network on Small Arms, the International Peace Bureau, Educators for Social Responsibility and Hidankyo, a coalition of Japanese NGOs representing the survivors of the atomic bomb and research institutes. In connection with the peace and disarmament education project, the Department continued to collaborate with the Hague Appeal for Peace, which comprises more than 1,000 organizations worldwide.

44. The Department cooperated with the NGO Committee on Disarmament and the Department of Public Information in facilitating a number of panel discussions in the fall of 2002 and 2003 during Disarmament Week, and in the spring of 2004 during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Discussions covered a wide range of topics. These included issues related to missiles and nuclear weapons, biological weapons and verification and compliance.

45. The Department facilitated the participation of NGOs in major disarmament-related conferences, including the United Nations first biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on small arms and light weapons, the Open-ended Working Group on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

46. In collaboration with Member States and States parties, the Department also enabled NGOs to address delegations in all the above-mentioned conferences, at open meetings set aside for that purpose.

47. This now-regularized active participation of NGOs in disarmament-related conferences plays a key role in making Governments increasingly aware not only of the role of NGOs as advocates, but also their highly specialized expertise in certain fields.

48. The Department will continue to facilitate the participation of NGOs in disarmament-related conferences and will continue to support their activities in disseminating and advocating United Nations ideals and principles. It will also seek to further expand its collaboration with civil society in promoting arms limitation and disarmament.

V. Activities of the Department of Public Information

A. Public information campaigns

49. The Department of Public Information continued its efforts to help raise public awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and related issues. It carries out its programme through the use of a full range of information and telecommunications tools in all official languages, from printed press releases and background notes to radio and television and a multifaceted web site, from dissemination at Headquarters throughout the worldwide network of information centres. During the reporting period, it worked closely with the Department for Disarmament Affairs on public information strategies for the second and third meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 2003 second biennial meeting of States to review the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the 2004 Open-Ended Working Group on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

B. Radio and television

50. The Department of Public Information continued to cover various disarmament-related topics in its daily news programmes and current affairs magazines in official and non-official languages for worldwide and regional dissemination. Some of the issues covered were: extensive coverage of the Iraq crisis and the role of the Security Council, Hans Blix, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); IAEA and North Korea's alleged nuclear programme; the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction programme and the role of the United Nations and IAEA in this respect; IAEA's contribution to combating international terrorism, such as efforts to better control radioactive sources; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention); the expert meetings of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Mass Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention); events and meetings on the illicit trade in small arms, and the Security Council's examination of the issue; United Nations disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, for example, in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Liberia, and the related issue of arms embargoes; the continuing challenges of landmines; and transparency of military spending and disarmament.

C. Printed materials

51. The Department of Public Information produced extensive press coverage on disarmament topics in both New York and Geneva, issuing a total of 294 press releases on disarmament-related topics, 175 in English and 119 in French.

52. In addition to press materials, the Department promoted awareness of disarmament through the following regular, and ad hoc publications:

(a) The *UN Chronicle*, published in print in all six languages and disseminated in English and French online and by means of the *UN Chronicle* feature service, regularly produces articles on disarmament information, including weapons of mass destruction and small arms. In the first quarterly issue each year, it provides comprehensive coverage of the disarmament work of the First Committee of the General Assembly. During the reporting period, the magazine also featured articles on disarmament, including "Combating Biological Weapons" by Michael Crowley (Issue 2, 2002); "The Road to Iraq's Disarmament" by Liz Willmott (Issue 1, 2003); "Certainly as Dangerous as a Cigarette" by Luis Alfonso de Alba (Issue 2, 2003); "Commitment to the Global Ban on Chemical Weapons" by Rogelio Pfirter; "The Success of the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention" by Jean Lint (Issue 3, 2003);

(b) *Yearbook of the United Nations*;

(c) New editions of two booklets, *UN in Brief* (print and online) and *Image and Reality* (online only);

(d) Completely updated 2004 edition of the popular *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, containing a section covering the full range of disarmament issues and the role of the United Nations in this field;

(e) In preparation for the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Department produced, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, a consolidated publication containing selected United Nations documents on small arms and light weapons.

D. Civil society and non-governmental organizations

53. The Department of Public Information organized its fifty-sixth annual NGO Conference, from 8 to 10 September 2003, with the participation of over 1,000 representatives of NGOs, on the theme "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations". The conference covered peace and disarmament education, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition to several midday workshops, the plenary sessions included a panel devoted to the theme "Educating for a Secure Future".

54. During the reporting period, weekly NGO briefings, with regular attendance of over 220 persons, featured two specific programmes on disarmament:

- The Disarmament Agenda: Engagement, Or Urgent Call, 24 October 2002
- The Future of Disarmament and Arms Control: Civil Society's Role, 23 October 2003.

E. Public affairs

55. On 19 September 2003, in a videoconference for a student observance of the International Day of Peace, the Public Inquiries Unit included the participation of

demobilized child soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone and youths at other United Nations peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and the Syrian Golan Heights, as well as a 20-year old Rwandese genocide survivor. They exchanged views about the causes and effects of war and peace with each other and with five United Nations Messengers of Peace who joined Mrs. Nane Annan. The demobilized child soldiers discussed their sense of powerlessness, power when armed with weapons and empowerment when they exchanged them for educational opportunities.

56. During the period from January 2003 until July 2004, the Group Programmes Unit organized 39 in-house briefings and one videoconference on disarmament issues.

57. The Exhibits Unit organized four exhibits related to armed conflict during 2003-2004, all of which contained disarmament-related components:

(a) The World Food Programme (WFP), through its Food for Life programme, featured photos and stories of the humanitarian plight of war victims and refugees from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone;

(b) An exhibit entitled "Aftershocks" included artwork and journals dealing with the psychological and physical consequences of armed conflict on youth in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and children in New York City who witnessed the destruction of the World Trade Center. The exhibit was reformatted into a multimedia online version developed by the United Nations Cyberschoolbus, the online education component of the Global Teaching and Learning Project;

(c) An exhibit entitled "Culture for Peace", dealt with conflict prevention and education for students;

(d) Another exhibit dealt with historical disarmament issues through recounting the life and work of Ralph Bunche, who was instrumental in formulating peace agreements in the Middle East and other conflict zones in the early years of the United Nations.

58. In addition, a special exhibit on disarmament, which is part of the tour route at United Nations Headquarters, includes displays on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as on small arms, landmines and chemical and biological weapons. This display was recently featured in a piece on IAEA on CNN's international programme "Diplomatic License". The display is viewed by almost 500,000 visitors per year, bringing its total audience to nearly 2 million since it was installed in 2000.

59. In the Guided Tours Unit during the past year there were background briefings on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization by its Preparatory Commission and on landmines by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In addition, the Department for Disarmament Affairs participated in the 2004 training of tour guides. The guides are updated on these issues as needed as part of their daily morning briefings.

F. Web site

60. The Department of Public Information is responsible for the United Nations web site, which is the framework for the web site developed by substantive departments. Its site thus supports the Department for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR web sites.

61. Disarmament-related issues received extensive coverage on the United Nations News Centre portal, on the Organization's web site, one of the most heavily visited areas on the entire web site. A wide range of news stories covering United Nations activities dealing with weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms were also distributed worldwide to over 25,000 e-mail subscribers to the United Nations News Service and many of those articles appeared on various external web sites, including GlobalSecurity.org, EuropaWorld.org and OneWorld.net.

62. Furthermore, the educational site Cyberschoolbus is developing an entire component devoted to disarmament issues. The Department of Public Information prominently features disarmament on its "Global Issues on the United Nations Agenda" site.

VI. Conclusion

63. During the period under review, the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme continued to focus its activities on information in the field of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and on small arms and light weapons. Other areas of attention were international terrorism, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and other transparency and confidence-building measures and the rise in global military expenditures.

64. Surveys conducted by the Department of Public Information among its subscribers, and by the Department for Disarmament Affairs among Governments, indicate that the flagship publication of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations *Disarmament Yearbook*, should continue to be issued, and that archival copies of past and current issues in CD-ROM and on the Internet would be highly appreciated.

65. The statistics being taken by the Department on the usage of its web site, disarmament.un.org, have shown a dramatic increase in the number of visitors to the site over the last two years. The Department will continue to expand and improve the site so as to provide current and accurate information in a dynamic format available to its growing audience.

66. The Department for Disarmament Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Public Information, will continue to facilitate access of civil society organizations at important upcoming disarmament-related events and meetings and to cooperate closely with NGOs, especially those coalitions that spearhead the participation of a large number of such organizations in the field of disarmament.

67. The Department is grateful for the support it has received from Governments to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme and appeals for continued support for its work.

Annex I

Status of Voluntary Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme based on the financial statement for the biennium 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2003

	(In United States dollars)
I. Fund balance as of 1 January 2002	**844 343**
II. Income	
1 January 2002-31 December 2003	
Voluntary contributions	398 856
Interest income	66 919
Miscellaneous/other income	34 555
Subtotal	**500 330**
III. Expenditures	
1 January 2002-31 December 2003	694 081
Programme support	90 231
Prior period adjustments	10 000
Other adjustments to reserves and fund balances	77 880
Subtotal	**872 192**
IV. Fund balance as at 31 December 2003	**472 481**

Annex II

Survey of users of *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* conducted by the Department for Disarmament Affairs

The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook is designed to be a concise but comprehensive reference work, targeting Member States as its primary users. The objective has been to present a yearly review of the main developments and negotiations in the field of disarmament and arms control in the multilateral framework.

In an effort to evaluate the relevance and to improve the quality and delivery of *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, the Department for Disarmament Affairs is conducting the current short survey. The Department is seeking to be more responsive to the information needs of its clients in line with the new orientation of the Organization towards results-based programme budgeting. Your answers to the following questions are highly appreciated. You may complete this questionnaire in print or, if you prefer, online (an electronic version was sent to all missions) to the e-mail address at the end of the form.

1. How do you find *The Disarmament Yearbook* in your work related to disarmament and arms control?

   a. [ ] Very useful

   b. [ ] Useful

   c. [ ] Somewhat useful

   d. [ ] Not useful

2. How do you rate the quality of the information contained in *The Disarmament Yearbook*?

	Very Good	Adequate	Inadequate
a. Objectivity/balance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b. Information accuracy	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c. Information sufficiency	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

3. Are there other kinds of information your Government would like reported in *The Disarmament Yearbook*?

   _____

   _____

4. How do you rate the technical presentation?

	Very Good	Adequate	Inadequate
a. Format	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b. Readability	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c. Cross-referencing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5. Would your Government prefer *The Disarmament Yearbook* available online?

a. [ ] Yes b. [ ] No

6. Would your Government prefer *The Disarmament Yearbook* available on a CD-ROM?

a. [ ] Yes b. [ ] No

7. Would you like to receive past issues of *The Disarmament Yearbook* on CD-ROM?

a. [ ] Yes b. [ ] No

8. If given a choice, you/your institution would most likely choose to receive:

a. [ ] Printed edition of the Yearbook only

b. [ ] CD-ROM version

c. [ ] Online version

d. [ ] All of the above

9. Currently, each Permanent Mission to the United Nations receives two copies of the printed edition of the Yearbook gratis. Do you need more copies?

a. [ ] Yes b. [ ] No

How many? _____

10. Do you have any other suggestions to improve *The Disarmament Yearbook* in order to better meet your needs in terms of contents, format and presentation?

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